

# MAKERS OF THE ARYA SAMAJ

## BOOK II



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# MAKERS OF THE ARYA SAMAJ

## BOOK II

SHORT BIOGRAPHIES OF  
PT. GURU DUTT AND PT. LEKH RAM

BY  
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DEDICATED TO  
MY REVERED FATHER  
GOSAIN NIHAL CHAND  
WHO FIRST INTRODUCED ME TO THE  
ARYA SAMAJ



I HAVE written these books to make people familiar with the lives and works of some of the most outstanding personalities connected with the Arya Samaj. In order to make their appeal as wide as possible I have written them in rather simple language. I trust these books will be read by everybody who is interested in the achievements of the great. They will, I am sure, afford a particular delight to the young for they will inspire them to live nobly and unselfishly. It need not be added that every attempt has been made to make these books as free from the sectarian spirit as possible.

My thanks are due to L. Mool Raj, B.A., B.T., a devout Arya Samajist, for reading through these books. I am also obliged to Mr. Sant Lal Vid-yarthi, B.A., for going through the lives of Pt. Guru Dutt, Pt. Lekh Ram and Swami Shrad-dhanand.

D. C. S.





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## PT. GURU DUTT

MULTAN is one of the historic towns in the Punjab. It is famous as the birthplace of Prahlad. This boy is well known for his devotion to God. He defied even his father, because he asked him to give up faith in God.

The town is very hot in summer. There is a couplet about it which says, “ There are four things for which Multan is well known. They are dust, heat, beggars and grave-yards.” It was in this town that Guru Dutt was born on the 26th of April, 1864.

It is said that one's ancestors and parents have much to do with the forming of one's character. Guru Dutt was very lucky in this respect. One of his ancestors was Raja Jagdishji. He was so devoted to his religion that he sacrificed even his life for it. He and his descendants came, therefore, to be known as *Sardanas* or those who gave their heads for their faith. This word afterwards came to be changed into *Sarvana*. All the people who belong to this family are known to this day

by that name. It is no wonder that Guru Dutt inherited a love of truth, a willingness to suffer for his religion, and a keen sense of duty.

Guru Dutt's great-grandfather was in the service of the Nawab of Bahawalpur. He was sent by him to the court of Kabul as an ambassador. Diwan Sawan Mal, ruler of Multan, treated the members of this family with great consideration. He looked upon them as his best friends. Whenever any of them paid a visit to Multan he sent his officers to receive him.

Guru Dutt's father was called L. Ram Krishan. All his life he was a teacher. He was one of the pioneers who were responsible for laying the foundations of the educational system in the Punjab. He was of medium size, but had a strong, well-built body. He was interested in Urdu and Persian literature and possessed a good deal of common-sense. His son took after him in many ways.

L. Ram Krishan was deeply religious by nature. He had great faith in Brahmins and gurus. For many years he was childless. One day he went to his guru and asked him in a piteous tone, "When will God bless me with a son? I do not want to die childless." The guru told him

not to despair. "God will be good to you," he said, "and a son will be born to you before long."

L. Ram Krishan had wonderful will power. The year before his death his son asked him to read Sanskrit. He therefore began to study this language. He made remarkable progress in it in a short time. After six months he was able to write to his son in this language. It is said that the letter contained very few mistakes. Such were his powers of application and memory even in old age.

Guru Dutt's mother was the best of mothers. She was an able woman who managed her household very well. Her purity was spotless, and she was much devoted to her husband. Even though he never got more than sixty rupees a month, there was comfort and luxury in the house that a rich man might have envied. It is true she was illiterate, but this did not very much matter. She made up for this by many other virtues. Best of all, she knew how to face troubles. She was never known to lose heart in a time of difficulty.

It was of such parents that Guru Dutt was born. At first he was given the name of Mula. But

when he was taken to his guru, he called him Bairagi. This was rather a peculiar name. But it seems the guru understood the child better than other people. He could see, even at that early age, that Guru Dutt cared little for worldly things. He showed signs of becoming a recluse.

When the boy was twelve years old he was taken to Hardwar. There another Brahmin called him by the name of Guran Ditta, which means that he was the gift of a guru. After some time he came to be known as Guru Dutt, which meant the same thing.

When Guru Dutt was five years old his education was taken in hand by his father. He did not send him to school but taught him at home. This was because he believed that the teachers in the Primary Schools were not quite competent. They beat and punished students, which seemed wrong to the father. He, on the other hand, thought that children should be made to learn without being punished. He thought that they should be given presents and sweets in order to encourage them to learn.

Guru Dutt learnt things very quickly. He mastered the Urdu alphabet in a very short time.

Then he read Persian. In Mathematics he took a special interest. He could do mentally even the most difficult questions of multiplication and division. It is said that he never required a slate or pencil and paper for solving such questions. In order to teach him English his father himself learnt the language. Even in this the boy did well.

At the age of eight the boy was admitted into a school at Jhang. There he made remarkable progress in his studies in a short time. He read the most difficult books in Persian without much trouble. He was also able to quote from memory a large number of couplets from these books. After a few years he passed the Middle School Examination from this school.

But his education at school was nothing compared with his training at home. His father always kept him away from bad company. He never allowed him to mix with evil-minded boys. He also took care that he should eat the right sort of food and have proper exercise. He drank plenty of milk. But he conceived a dislike for meat even at an early age, and would not take it even when asked by his father. Soon Guru Dutt grew up into a very fine lad.

But while his class-fellows read only their textbooks, he read other books also. One of these books awakened in him his deep spiritual nature. After reading it, he began to repeat certain words which have a spiritual meaning. He also learnt how to control his breath. One day his mother saw him doing this. She felt annoyed and asked him to give it up. But he replied, "Dear mother, look at the sky. The moon is shining there and the stars are twinkling. Then look around on earth. You find beautiful, green trees everywhere. Among their branches small birds sing their delightful songs. Don't you think there is someone who made all these things? It is to find Him that I am making efforts. Please do not feel annoyed with me. Father has said to me many times that we should all seek God. Why not let me try in my own way?" This was the beginning of his spiritual life.

But when Guru Dutt joined the Government High School, Multan, his faith in God began to wane. Some say that this was due to the study of scientific books. Others believe that it was the result of his study of other books. But it is a fact that for some time he professed atheism. A little later, however, he came under the



influence of the Arya Samaj. He attended its meetings regularly and read some of the books published by it. The result was that he joined the Arya Samaj in 1880. He then came to believe in God once again.

At Multan, Guru Dutt impressed everybody with his learning. He was a very well-read boy and his memory was wonderful. Once a gentleman repeated more than a hundred names which had no connection with one another. Guru Dutt was able to repeat them again in the same order. His memory was further strengthened by his wide studies. Not only did he read every book in his school library, but he read most of the books in the town library as well.

He knew a great deal of Persian. He also mastered the *Ashtadhyayi*, the most difficult of books on Sanskrit grammar. He knew Arabic. He was quite good at English and was able to read through the works of Milton, Shakespeare and Cowper. Besides these, he had a knowledge of Logic, Philosophy and Physics. It was no wonder that he was the fifth on the list of successful candidates in the Entrance Examination.

At school he was not merely known as a bookworm. He had the reputation of being a very

robust young man. He took long walks and could bear extremes of heat and cold. He was very fond of cricket and manly exercises. He even took part in races, in which he did well.

At the same time, he enjoyed the reputation of being honest and truthful. Once there was some trouble in the class. Guru Dutt and one of his friends were on one side and the remainder of the students were on the other. But the Headmaster believed these two and not the rest. It is said an appeal was sent against the decision of the Headmaster to the Inspector. But he also decided the matter on the evidence of these two young men.

Even at this time of his life he liked to meet *sadhus*. One such person came to Multan. Though an old man of one hundred and twenty, he looked as if he was only thirty years old. He ate very little and had no grey hair on his head. Guru Dutt often went to see him and asked him many questions about yoga, the Vedas and other subjects. This showed how much he was interested in these matters even when he was young.

In January, 1881, Guru Dutt joined the Government College, Lahore. There he had class-mates

who afterwards became very famous. Some of these were Mahatma Hans Raj, L. Lajpat Rai, Prof. Ruchi Ram and Raja Narendra Nath. Most of these are still alive and recall with affection and pride the memory of Pt. Guru Dutt.

At Lahore it did not take Guru Dutt long to establish himself in the estimation of his classmates and professors. Everyone looked upon him as an extraordinary young man. He won every heart with his ability and good behaviour. His mind was pure, his thoughts were noble, his learning was very wide and he could express himself with power. All these things made him beloved in the eyes of everybody.

At college he devoted most of his time to study. He read the works of John Stuart Mill, a great English philosopher. He was especially fond of his autobiography, which he read over and over again. He also read such philosophers as Bain, Bentham and Bradlaugh. In addition he studied literature and mathematics. His appetite for reading could never be satisfied.

In spite of reading so many different subjects he came first in the Intermediate examination. Everybody marvelled. It was thought very strange that this should have happened. For Guru

Dutt was more interested in general books than in his own textbooks. He was also very fond of attending public lectures and meetings, and seemed to take very little interest in his college work.

While he was at college he founded the Free Debating Club. He himself acted as its secretary. All the best students of the college belonged to this club. All kinds of subjects, religious, moral, social and political, were discussed at its meetings. Though this club did not last more than two or three years it did much good. In the first place, it taught young men to express their ideas without hurting anybody's feelings. It also added to their store of information. Above all, it taught them that there was no conflict between science and religion. Many of the young men who did not believe in God before joining it, came to have faith in Him afterwards.

Guru Dutt himself took a leading part in all these debates. Those who heard him at that time learnt how widely he had read and with what force he could argue. But this was not the only public activity in which he took part. He was a member of the Arya Samaj and used to edit an

English weekly for it. He also started a school of science in connection with the Arya Samaj. A large number of people used to attend these classes. Its purpose was to spread knowledge and banish superstition.

In 1883, when Guru Dutt was a third year student, he heard that Swami Dayanand was dangerously ill. L. Jiwan Das and he were at that time asked by the Lahore Arya Samaj to go to Ajmer and look after Swamiji. Guru Dutt willingly and gladly consented to do so. He went to Ajmer and stayed there for about a month. During that time he served Swamiji with a devotion worthy of a son.

Guru Dutt was near Swamiji when he lay on his death-bed. Swamiji was at that time calm and fearless. He repeated the Gayatri Mantra very often and died saying, "Peace, peace, peace. Thy will be done." His death had a great effect on Guru Dutt. He felt that there was nothing so good in this world as faith in God. He also thought that every member of the Arya Samaj should carry on the work of Swamiji. He practically made up his own mind to do so.

On his return to Lahore he gave an account of the last days of Swami Dayanand. He also gave

active support to those who wanted to found the D.A.-V. College. He helped the cause not only with his speeches but also gave his own money. He gave away twenty-five rupees, his one month's scholarship, for this purpose.

In 1885 he gave his first public lecture in English at Lahore. That year he passed the B.A. examination. It was really remarkable that, with so many other activities, he should have come first amongst the successful candidates. It was all the more remarkable in view of the fact that his health had been rather bad that year. He had also been devoting much of his time to the Arya Samaj.

At that time the Arya Samaj was confronted with two very important questions—the formation of the D.A.-V. College Managing Committee as well as that of the Provincial Representative Assembly. Both these matters provoked a good deal of discussion.

But it was Guru Dutt's intelligence and eloquence that helped in solving these questions. Though much of his time was given to the Arya Samaj, he did not neglect his inner life. At that time he wrote in his diary, "One who loves God never cares for wealth. I wish India

were inhabited only by lovers of God." This shows how keenly he felt the need of spiritual devotion.

In 1886 he passed the M.A. examination in Physics. That year he was appointed Assistant Professor of Physics in the Government College, Lahore. Though his work in the college was very difficult, yet he did it very ably. The Arya Samaj also claimed a great deal of his time. At that time it needed a man of learning who also had faith in its mission. Such a man was Guru Dutt. He had to go about from place to place, therefore, to explain its mission.

Pt. Guru Dutt was an untiring worker who read a great deal. For instance, at this time he studied the system of Indian medicine. After doing so he came to believe that this was the only system suited to Indians. He also wrote a great deal. An English weekly called *The Arya Patrika* had been started by the Arya Samaj. He wrote a large number of articles for this paper. He also delivered a great number of lectures. These were very learned, being the result of much study. He took part in all these activities in addition to his work at the college.



PT. GURU DUTT



In 1887 Panditji was appointed the officiating Professor of Physics. He taught so well that all his students passed. During this year he and some others visited a large number of places like Aligarh, Bareilly, Muradabad, Lucknow, Benares, Allahabad, Cawnpore and Farukhabad in the U.P. The purpose of this deputation was to collect funds for the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College, Lahore. Wherever he went he delivered lectures. In these he dwelt on the glories of the ancient Aryan civilization. He believed the Vedas to be inspired books. He thought that everybody should read them. In his lectures he often laid emphasis on Brahmcharya (celibacy). He believed this to be the only way to strengthen one's character. He repeatedly asked his hearers not to run after the things of this world, but to save their own souls. He told them that the best thing was to practise what they believed in.

At a time when everybody was marvelling at Western civilization, he told people of the glories of Eastern civilization. He said that the D.A.-V. College, Lahore, was founded to spread the message of the Vedas and to strengthen people's faith in Brahmcharya. Therefore, it deserved the support of everybody.

But during these days his life was darkened by the illness of his father. He was an affectionate and obedient son and felt it his duty to do everything to please him. He cut out many public engagements in order to be near his father. One day he received a telegram saying that his father had died. He wired back that the body should not be burnt till he had arrived. He then left for Multan at once. On reaching there he made up his mind to burn his father's dead body according to the Vedic rites. He was afraid lest his mother should stand in his way, but she did not. The members of his community did, however. They threatened him with social boycott, but he did not care. In the end, he had his way. Then everybody admired him for his moral courage.

Pt. Guru Dutt came back to Lahore after this. There he found that preparations were being made for the tenth anniversary of the Arya Samaj. He was invited to deliver two lectures, one in Hindi and the other in English, and he agreed.

This is what *The Arya Patrika* wrote about his lectures at the time. "Panditji addressed an audience consisting of about three thousand people.

All these people listened to him with undivided attention. He expressed his ideas with great enthusiasm and sincerity. Every word that he spoke came from his heart. It appeared as if he had himself felt the truth of what he said and himself had faith in whatever he preached. It has seldom been our lot to listen to such an eloquent lecture. When he referred to the life of Swami Dayanand many people began to cry. Last of all, he asked people to support the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College. It was the truest monument to the memory of Swami Dayanand."

Pt. Guru Dutt was invited to Ajmer where he delivered two lectures. One of his lectures was on truth. In it he asked people to practise truthfulness in word, deed and thought. Panditji himself was an honest and straightforward man. He was against all forms of falsehood. His lecture was well received.

Another lecture was delivered at Amritsar. In it he asked people to have deep faith in the Vedas. He said that it was no use merely professing faith in them. We should read them and practise what they teach.

In 1888 the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic High School, Lahore, stood first in the Entrance Examination

in the whole province. Some people expressed a desire that it should be raised to the standard of a college. Pt. Guru Dutt was one of these. The suggestion was opposed by some very influential persons. At last a meeting of the D.A.-V. College Managing Committee was held at which it was decided to open college classes. Panditji then promised to pay ten rupees a month for one year to the college. He also acted as Professor of Mathematics and Physics for some time.

Shortly afterwards Pt. Guru Dutt gave a series of lectures on the Arya Samaj. The object of these lectures was to show that European scholars had not understood the Vedas rightly. He quoted passages from their translations to show that they had made many mistakes. He also learnt at that time how to chant the mantras. When he went to attend the anniversary of Peshawar Arya Samaj he gave some specimens of it. This pleased the audience very much. In his lectures he said that we should understand the real purpose of life. We should not waste our life running after money and fame. We should always aim at being good.

Panditji believed that science had failed to solve the problem of life. It could throw no light on

our origin. It could not tell us where we would go after death. It is true that with its help we can examine a drop of blood and analyse objects, but it had failed to satisfy the soul. Only the Vedas could explain the secrets of the Universe.

At one time some learned sanyasis came under the influence of Panditji and became zealous preachers of the Arya Samaj. One of these sanyasis was Swami Achyuta Nand. This learned sanyasi was a leader of a sect of the Vedantists. He had a large number of respectable and learned followers. He was a great scholar of the Upanishadas, and knew Sanskrit very well. After listening to Panditji he became a follower of the Arya Samaj. Fortunately he is still alive and is an active preacher. In the same way, several other sanyasis accepted the faith of the Arya Samaj under his leadership.

Panditji did not neglect his studies in any way during this period. He read several books of Sanskrit, such as the Upanishadas, the Brahmanas, the Nirukta and the Charka. He also studied astronomy. But what gave him the utmost pleasure were the works of Swami Dayanand. He read them over and over again. He said, "The

more I read the books written by Swami Dayanand the more I admire his learning and noble character.” He also read a book written by an American philosopher. He was so much impressed by it that he recommended it to all his friends. Though he would lend other books to his friends, he would not part with this one.

In spite of leading such a busy life he found time for writing books. It is really wonderful how Panditji found so much time for all his varied work. It is said that he used to keep himself busy from morning till evening. Whether at home or elsewhere he never wasted his time. His house was a meeting-place of all kinds of people. Whoever wanted light on any religious matter went to see him. He explained to people not only the deep wisdom of the Vedas, but also taught them how to uplift themselves.

This active life told upon his health. Scattered here and there in his diary we find many references to his illness. In one place he wrote, “I am ill but I cannot take any rest. I have to deliver an important lecture and must work at it.” There were also many things connected with Arya Samaj that worried him. One was the

question as to whether classes for training preachers should be attached to the college. The other was the question whether meat-eaters should be kept in the Arya Samaj.

He was also worried at this time about his own future. His diary shows that this question troubled him a great deal. There was the temptation to get a good job, to live well and to grow rich. Nothing could have been easier for Panditji than this. He had already started well. He was a Professor in the Government College. Moreover, the Senate of the Punjab University was prepared to recommend him for the post of an Extra Assistant Commissioner. He had, in fact, been asked by the Deputy Commissioner to see him in this connection. What other people could not get even after much effort could have been had by him for the mere asking. But this kind of career had no real attraction for him.

On the other hand, there was the joy of serving one's fellow-men. This kind of life appealed to him. He preferred to sacrifice his own future for the good of his country. He had found the mission of his life and he wanted to carry it out. He was to be one of the missionaries of the Arya

Samaj. He knew there were many difficulties in the way. He had to support his old mother and his own family. But he did not allow this to dissuade him. It was his belief that God always looks after those who choose to follow the path of goodness.

At last he made up his mind about the matter. He said that he would not take up any service at all. He believed this would crush his independence of spirit and would not allow him to express his opinions so boldly. It would become impossible for him to obey his own wishes. He would be no more than a slave or hireling and not the master of his own will. He resolved, therefore, to lead an independent life. He said that he would live for the Arya Samaj. For this purpose he thought of starting the *Vedic Magazine*. In coming to these decisions he turned his back upon the riches of the world.

There was a further problem which gave him no end of trouble. We have already seen that as a boy he was interested in Pranayam. He kept up his interest in it all his life. As time passed, he thought he would like to be a *yogi*. To achieve this he read widely upon the subject. He also met many persons well versed in this science. To



qualify himself for it he began to practise many kinds of austerities. As a result his health broke down.

He soon began to suffer from bad colds. He also had a bad attack of coughing. He was, therefore, advised by some of his friends to go to a hill-station. He went to Murree, in the company of L. Lajpat Rai. There he developed fever. But he was so careless about his health that he accepted an invitation to attend the anniversary of the Peshawar Arya Samaj. On reaching it he delivered two or three lectures. Then he went back to Lahore. At Lahore his life was as full of activities as before. The Arya Samaj had problems to face, to which he gave much of his time. He also defended the Arya Samaj against the attacks of the orthodox Hindus. In reply to a lecture given by one of them he gave such a fine speech that fifty persons joined the Arya Samaj. Then one of the orthodox Hindus said that Panditji did not know how to speak in Sanskrit. He took up the challenge and delivered a speech in Sanskrit for a whole hour. This indicates the extent of his learning.

In the meantime his condition became critical and people thought his end was near. A little

later the anniversary of the Lahore Arya Samaj was held. But he did not attend it. Though he was only a skeleton of his former self, he continued to attend the meetings of the D.A.-V. College Managing Committee.

After a few days he fell very ill. He was taken to Gujranwala for treatment. The doctor did his best, yet the patient did not feel better. He was then taken to Lahore where he was treated by several doctors and *vaid*s. For a few days his condition improved and people began to think that he would be all right. But it was a false hope. It soon came to be known that the disease was past cure.

During the days of his illness Panditji showed wonderful powers of endurance. Not once did he express any kind of anxiety about his health. He simply asked one of his friends to read the Upanishadas to him daily. Another friend sang some hymns to him. He himself repeated the Ved Mantras. By this means he remained calm and serene to the last.

On the 18th of March, 1890, he breathed his last at 7 o'clock in the morning. The news of his death spread rapidly. A large number of people gathered in front of his house. Every one of

them looked sad and dispirited and all felt the loss to be great. When the dead body was taken to the cremation ground, it was followed by many persons. Though all were full of grief yet saddest of all was his mother. She cried very piteously, and her grief pierced the heart of everybody.

Meetings of condolence were held all over the province and many resolutions were passed. One of the papers wrote, "The whole Punjab is in mourning on account of the death of Pt. Guru Dutt. It is a pity that he should have been cut off so early in life. He was one of the leaders of the Arya Samaj and his loss is felt very keenly by every Arya Samajist. The deceased was a seeker after truth. He was a great scholar of Sanskrit. He was a man of restless activity and firm determination. He was a remarkable speaker and a fine debater. He was a man of spotless purity and was entirely free from deceit and vanity. He had a wonderful hold on people and his house was the meeting-place of all kinds of men."

A Christian paper wrote about him, "Pt. Guru Dutt who died a few days ago was a prominent member of the Arya Samaj. His death is a great

public loss and all have felt it keenly. He was a public-spirited man who worked for the good of his country. He was very fond of study, and was in touch with the problems of the world of to-day. He was a great scholar of Sanskrit and wrote several books on the Vedas. All admired him for his simplicity, devotion to truth and kindness of heart."

A Muslim paper wrote the following about him, " Pt. Guru Dutt knew Western Literature as much as Sanskrit. He was an eloquent speaker and his speeches in English were very fine. He sacrificed his life for the Arya Samaj, because he was so devoted to it. It is a pity that he should have died so early."

This short life of Pt. Guru Dutt will be incomplete if it does not contain something about his habits and character. He was very irregular in his habits. He had no fixed time for doing anything. He went to bed when he liked and got up when he wanted. He had no fixed time for taking his meals or taking his exercise. Sometimes he slept for twenty-four hours on end and sometimes he did not sleep for days. If he felt interested in a book, he sacrificed his sleep to finish it. If he felt like taking a walk, he walked

for many miles. But sometimes he would not stir out of his house for days together.

He was also careless about his food. Yet he never touched any intoxicant. Nor did he take any chillies. He had a great aversion to meat though he was very fond of vegetables. Once he lived on milk and biscuits for two months at a stretch.

He was equally careless about his dress. He never wore clothes for show, but simply for the protection of his body. Even in this matter he was not strict. Sometimes in winter he would be seen in very light clothes. On the other hand, he would wear warm clothes in summer. He would often go out without even a coat, and cover his body with only a blanket. He did not despise European dress. He was, indeed, fond of English trousers. He used to say that these were very helpful in an active life.

He never gave himself airs. He used to put on whatever clothes came to his hands. Many people thought that his dress was very clumsy, but he did not mind what they said. He loved cleanliness above everything. Once when he had no servant, he washed his clothes with his own hands. He did this for two months.

He was never in love with money. He never tried to hoard it. He spent most of what he earned on others. Never did a friend make a request for money to him in vain. Much of his money was spent on buying books. Whatever was left over was given away to needy students.

He was a very kind-hearted man. He was specially good to those who were not his equals. He talked for hours with such persons. He knew how to adapt himself to the company of others. Amongst children he behaved like a child; while in the company of elders he was as serious as they. He was free from vanity and hated insincerity and hypocrisy. He did not believe in being polite merely for the sake of politeness.

He was very fond of exercise. He loved gymnastics and long walks. As long as he was in the Government College, he was a member of the cricket and football clubs. He was very particular about his bath. Every day, summer and winter, he would bathe twice a day with cold water.

There are many lessons that can be learnt from the life of Pt. Guru Dutt. We shall, however, draw attention to only a few of these. Excepting Swami Dayanand no member of the Arya Samaj has been so able and learned as Pt. Guru Dutt.

He knew Western Science and Literature as well as Sanskrit and Indian philosophy. It was for this reason that he was called a Pandit, even though he was not born as such.

But what distinguished him more than anything else was his love of study. He used to call himself a Vidyarthi, which means a student. Panditji was a student in the real sense of the word. Even after passing his M.A. examination he did not give up his interest in books. He used to say that the real student life begins only when one has finished at school or college. It was for this reason that he began to study Eastern and Western philosophy after passing the M.A. examination.

But Pt. Guru Dutt did not use his knowledge for the sake of show or ornament. He did not use it even for getting a good position. He acquired knowledge for its own sake. All his life he was busy reading and writing. If ever he found any leisure, he used it in teaching others.

It is, however, a pity that Pt. Guru Dutt did not pay much attention to his health. Nature had given him good physical powers, but he did not pay proper attention to them. He was so irregular in his habits that he soon fell a prey to consumption. This caused his death at a very early age.

The greatest service that Pt. Guru Dutt did to the Arya Samaj was to create an interest in the study of the Vedas. It was his belief that only by studying the Vedas could India become great. It is to be regretted that since his death the Arya Samaj has not been paying as much attention to this matter as it deserves.



## PT. LEKH RAM

MOST people are familiar with the name of Jhelum. It is one of the districts of the Punjab. In this district there is a tehsil named Chakwal. Eight miles to the east of it is a village called Syyadpur. It is situated on a small hill. It is a beautiful place with a fine climate.

On three sides of it flow streams. Their waters swell in the rainy season, but they dry up in winter. One of these streams is known as the Kashi. The other is known as the Saraswati.

During the days of Sikh rule Syyadpur was an important town. It had a fort which a Sikh chief had built. It is said that it was swept away by floods in the rivers. The ruins of this fort can be seen to-day.

In this town lived a man named Mehta Narain Singh. He did not at first belong to this place. He really belonged to a place in the Rawalpindi district.

Mehta Narain Singh had two sons—Tara Singh and Ganda Ram. Ganda Ram was employed in

the Police at Peshawar. After retiring he settled at Rawalpindi. He is still alive, though more than eighty. In spite of his old age, he is active and strong.

Tara Singh had three sons and one daughter. His eldest son was named Lekh Ram. They were all Brahmins of a very high caste. But they were Brahmins only in name, for Mehta Narain Singh had been a mighty warrior. He was a cavalry officer under a Sikh chieftain, and was well known for his strength and bravery. For this reason his master was very pleased with him.

Once Narain Singh went with his master to fight against the Pathans. Unluckily, on the battlefield he was hit with a bullet. But such was his courage and bravery that he did not show the least sign of fear. He did not even utter a word to show his pain. When the wound healed, his chieftain presented him with a pair of big gold bracelets. After this he took part in many more battles.

Sham Singh was the younger brother of Narain Singh. He practised celibacy to the last day of his life. When the Sikh rule came to an end, he became a recluse. Then he set out on his travels.

Every one who saw him admired him for his simplicity and nobility of character. He died when Lekh Ram was about thirteen years old. It is no wonder that the boy was much influenced by his character.

Lekh Ram was born in 1858 at Syyadpur. All were pleased at his birth, but none was happier than his father, Tara Singh. Even as a boy Lekh Ram appeared to be very intelligent. His parents had high hopes about him.

When he was five years old he was sent to the village school. There he was taught Urdu and Persian. At that time Urdu and Persian were the languages of the court. Lekh Ram's parents were anxious for him to get a Government position. This was but natural, for in those days even a petty Government position was thought to be more important than any other.

Lekh Ram was never taught Hindi and Sanskrit while he was a boy. Nevertheless he was religious by nature. One of his aunts used to observe a fast on every *ekadshi* day. Lekh Ram also began to do the same. His elders told him that he was too young to do so. But he did not listen to them. He kept up this practice for a long time. This shows his will power even as a boy.

He had not been at school very long when the Inspector came to visit it. He examined all the students, but Lekh Ram seemed to him to be the best. He was so struck with his intelligence that he gave him a special prize.

When he was eleven years old Lekh Ram left for Peshawar. He stayed there with his uncle who was employed in the Police. This gentleman made some arrangements for his education. He sent him to some teachers to learn Urdu and Persian, but he did not learn much from them. Instead of listening patiently to what they said, he would tire them with questions of his own. He did not, therefore, get on well with these.

However, he stayed on with his uncle till he was fourteen years old. Then he went back to his village. There he joined the village school again. The Headmaster of the school was, at that time, Munshi Tulsi Das.

Lekh Ram read a large number of books with him. But he learnt far more from the teacher than from the books. For Munshi Tulsi Das was a kind-hearted gentleman who was always ready to help others. He was an entirely unselfish and unworldly person. He spent whatever he earned on the poor. He took great interest in

Lekh Ram, for he felt that he was not like other boys. In the first place he was more intelligent than his class-fellows. He had also greater strength of character than they.

He was also deeply religious. While he was at Peshawar he came under the influence of an old Sikh gentleman, who taught him to read Gurmukhi. He also made him read the Gita in Gurmukhi. Lekh Ram would get up very early every day. First he would take his bath. Then he would read the Gita. He also learnt from this gentleman how to control his breath. After some practice he became very good at it.

But Lekh Ram was too independent to satisfy his teacher. The latter, therefore, often wrote to his uncle about him. In one of his letters he wrote, "Lekh Ram can speak fluently. He can talk well. He reads a good deal. But he does not listen to others. If he had had a little more tact, he would have been the best of my students."

From this it is clear that Lekh Ram's teacher was not entirely pleased with him. This was but natural, because Lekh Ram was in the habit of expressing his ideas rather fearlessly. He never cared if this offended anybody. Nevertheless, his teacher had a high regard for him.

This is what he wrote on the occasion of the martyrdom of Lekh Ram. “ Lekh Ram, as well as his other brothers, read with me. Of these Lekh Ram was the best. He was of medium size, and his complexion was dark. His forehead was broad, and his eyes black. He was very cheerful by disposition. He was a very sincere person. But he was very careless about his dress. He never cared if he had tied his turban properly or not. Nor did he mind if his shirt was properly buttoned. His memory was wonderful. He would know by heart a thing he had read only once. His knowledge of Persian was remarkable for his age. He could read even the most difficult books in Persian without any trouble. He was, however, very hot-tempered.”

At school Lekh Ram wrote verses both in Urdu and Persian. It is said he tried his hand at writing verses in Punjabi also. However, none of these can be found now.

Lekh Ram was sixteen years old when he left the school. His people wanted him to get a position somewhere. At first they asked Munshi Tulsi Das to find him a place as a teacher. But as he did not succeed in doing so they sent Lekh Ram to Peshawar. There with the help of his uncle he

got a job in the Police department. Since he was a fearless person, everybody came to have a great regard for him.

But no one had a greater regard for him than his European superintendent. He liked him very much for he was very straightforward and honest. He is reported to have said one day, "I am sure Lekh Ram will get into trouble some day on account of his honesty and fearlessness. I would never be surprised if I heard that he had been killed."

Lekh Ram's life in the Police was not in any way eventful. He got the usual promotion in rank and pay every year. But nothing happened to him beyond this. As time passed, he felt more and more inclined to resign his post. It was probably because he felt the vanity of power and the futility of everything belonging to this world.

One result of this was that he refused to marry when his parents asked him. At first they wrote to persuade him to do so. But when this failed, they asked his uncle to see him personally. But Lekh Ram would not listen to him. He said very politely but firmly, "How can you expect me to marry when my heart is set on something different?"

The affairs of this world have no charm for me. I want to lead a religious life. Marriage and a religious life, you know, do not go well together. Please do not press me to do what I feel to be wrong." His uncle, therefore, gave up the attempt in despair.

The question may be asked, How did Lekh Ram come to think like this?

It has already been said that at an early age he came under the influence of a certain Sikh gentleman, who taught him to read the Gita. He was so much influenced by this book that he became a devotee of Shri Krishna. It became a habit with him to repeat the name of Shri Krishna all day long. He also came to have an interest in *ras lila*. He even thought of going to Muttra and Brindaban, the two places sacred to Shri Krishna.

Afterwards he learnt Hindi. Then he got a copy of the Gita in that language. It then became a passion with him to read the Gita. The study of it had a strange effect on him. It filled him with thoughts of renunciation. He wanted to give up the world.

Just at this time he came under the influence of a person called Munshi Kanhya Lal Alakhdhari.



This gentleman wrote a great deal, and his writings had a great effect on the young men of the Punjab and the United Provinces. In his writings he continually asked people to do away with the old superstitions. He was a kind of religious reformer.

After some time this gentleman met Swami Dayanand. He was influenced by him and then accepted him as his Guru. The result was that he became an Arya Samajist. Afterwards he began to explain the teachings of Swami Dayanand in his writings. Whoever read them learnt about the creed of the Arya Samaj.

One of the persons who read his books was Lekh Ram. In this way he became a follower of Swami Dayanand by reading the writings of Munshi Alakhdhari. No sooner did this happen than he began to convert others also to his view. He soon established an Arya Samaj at Peshawar. Meetings were held almost every day at his house.

To start with, there were only four members. But after some time they had a fifth member also. He was the man from whom Lekh Ram had learnt Vedant. For a long time this gentleman refused to accept the new faith. At last when arguments had failed, Lekh Ram said to him,

“There are five of us, and we are all very good friends. Four of us are now members of the Arya Samaj, and we want you to be the same. Even if you do not want to do it for any other reason, you should join for friendship’s sake. Thus all five of us will stand together in this matter, as we have done in so many other things.” This caused their friend to change his mind. The five of them were then able to do a great deal of work for the Arya Samaj.

After this Lekh Ram began to live like a true Arya Samajist. He said his prayers every day. He read the Vedas and other scriptures without fail. All these greatly increased his faith in the Arya Samaj. At last in 1880 he thought of going to Ajmer. His purpose in doing so was to see Swami Dayanand, the great reformer, and to talk with him on various matters.

He took leave for a month and set out for Ajmer. On the way he stopped at Lahore, Amritsar, Meerut and other places. At these places he met prominent members of the Arya Samaj. He had many talks with them about the Arya Samaj. A few days later he reached Ajmer. Then one morning he went to see the rishi in the garden where he was staying.

It was a very interesting meeting. Lekh Ram forgot all the hardships of the journey as soon as he saw his guru. He then placed some of his difficulties before him. These Swamiji explained very clearly. He still asked more questions. To all he got very satisfactory answers. One of these questions was whether the followers of other faiths should be converted to the Vedic religion or not. Swamiji said that they should be. He also asked such questions as, "What is electricity?" Swamiji explained them all very briefly. In the end Swamiji asked Lekh Ram not to marry till he was twenty-five.

This meeting strengthened Lekh Ram's faith in the Arya Samaj. He went back fully convinced that the truth was only to be found in the Vedas. But he did not neglect the study of other religions. One day he was found reading some books on Islam. A friend of his asked him why he was doing so. He replied, "Just think for a moment that you are thirsty, and in front of you there are ten pitchers full of water. You want to drink only that water which is cool and fresh. You take a little from every pitcher, therefore, to find which is the best. You then drink that which you find to be the best of all. The case is similar

with religion. There are many religions in this world. I must know something about all of them. Only then can I judge which is the best.”

On his return from Ajmer Lekh Ram began to take more and more interest in the Arya Samaj. In the first place, he took to the study of Sanskrit. He even wanted to go to Benares to master this language. It was because he felt that without reading Sanskrit he could not understand the Vedas, the sacred books of the Hindus. He also started a monthly called *The Dharmupadesh* in Urdu. The object of this paper was to make the Arya Samaj better known.

At the same time he began to deliver lectures. One of his lectures was on the evils of drinking. Many prominent people came to hear this. These included some Englishmen. At the end of the lecture an English Captain in the army said, “I agree with every word that the lecturer has spoken. I know the evils of drinking. I have, therefore, forbidden the soldiers in my regiment to drink.”

After some time Lekh Ram was transferred from Peshawar to an outlying station. But he still continued to edit the monthly. He also paid his subscriptions regularly to the Arya Samaj. Nor did he give up his interest in spreading his faith.

It is said that one day an Inspector of Police came to visit the Police station. Lekh Ram talked with him about religious matters. In this discussion he had the better of the officer. The Inspector, therefore, felt very humiliated, so he made up his mind to punish him. On reaching Peshawar he sent orders that Lekh Ram should be degraded. He also transferred him to another place.

On reaching the new place Lekh Ram found that the Mohammadans there were very hostile to him. But he did not mind this. Nor did he hide his love for the Arya Samaj. He drew a flag on the office copy of the Indian Penal Code. On it he wrote the word Om, the sacred word for the Aryans. At the same time, he expressed a wish that the Vedic religion should spread all over the world.

It was at this place that he learnt that the Peshawar Arya Samaj had decided not to publish *The Dharmupadesh*. He tried to persuade them to change their mind. But it was of no avail. However, he continued to write for other papers.

In the end, he made up his mind to give up his job in the Police. He therefore submitted his resignation. His English officers asked him to take it back. But he would not change his mind.

His resignation was accepted on the 30th September, 1884, and he became free from the responsibilities and cares of his position.

He was now free to devote himself entirely to the work of the Arya Samaj. He found, however, that there were some Arya Samajists who did not live up to their faith. For such people he had no sympathy. He wanted them either to reform or resign the membership of the Arya Samaj. It is said that on one occasion one such person was proposed for the presidentship of the Peshawar Arya Samaj. Pt. Lekh Ram opposed his election, even though he was a very rich man.

Pt. Lekh Ram now divided his time between writing books and delivering lectures. He was especially interested in Islam. He wrote many books about it. About that time a new Mohamman sect came into being. It was known as the Ahmediya sect of Qadian. Its founder was Mirza Ghulam Ahmed, who claimed to be a prophet. He said that he was the last of the line of the prophets. He therefore asked the Hindus, the Mohammadans and the Christians to follow him.

He also wrote a book in four parts. In the fourth part he severely criticised the Arya Samaj.

No sooner did Pt. Lekh Ram read it than he felt indignant. There and then he made up his mind to write a crushing reply to this book. So he spent some time on it and wrote the first part. But he was too busy to get it published. Nevertheless, the book passed from one person to another in manuscript. Thus many persons came to read it even before it had been published.

Pt. Lekh Ram then learnt that two Hindus were going to be converted to Islam through the influence of Mirza Ghulam Ahmed. One of these persons belonged to Jammu, the other belonged to Muzaffarnagar. The Pandit went to these places and saw both these persons himself. He had long talks with them on religious matters. In the end, he succeeded in persuading them not to give up their faith.

He also took in hand two other things at this time. He did this under instructions from Swami Dayanand himself. One was that he should get the memorial for the protection of the cow signed by as many persons as possible. The other was that a memorial should be sent to the Government to permit the teaching of Hindi in schools. Some time after this Swami Dayanand died. Lekh Ram naturally felt sad at his death. But he also



PT. LEKH RAM



realised that he should redouble his efforts for the success of his master's mission.

For many years after this Pt. Lekh Ram continued to move from one place to another to spread the message of the Arya Samaj. He first visited Rawalpindi. There he delivered a lecture on the occasion of the anniversary of the Arya Samaj. Since he was not as yet a practised speaker he wrote out what he had to say. The subject of his lecture was very interesting. He said that the Vedic religion was a world religion. To prove his point he cited many examples. All these showed the extent of his learning as well as his faith in his own mission.

From Rawalpindi he went to Gurdaspur. There he threw out a challenge to Mirza Ghulam Ahmed to have a discussion with him on religious matters. But he did not receive a reply. He then delivered some very stirring speeches, in which he tried to show the superiority of the Vedic religion over some other religions.

In the same way, he visited Amritsar, Lahore and Peshawar. Wherever he went he made it a point to expose the new Qadian sect. He also wrote many letters to Mirza Ghulam Ahmed asking him to have a discussion with him. To one

of his letters Mirza Sahib replied, "I do not want to discuss things with ordinary persons. If any influential member of the Arya Samaj wants to have any discussion with me, he is welcome." But even this did not dishearten Pt. Lekh Ram. He still went on writing to his opponent. To one of his letters he at last got the following reply, "Qadian is not far off. You can come here and settle matters personally."

At this Pt. Lekh Ram went to Qadian. There he met Mirza Sahib quite a number of times. At all these meetings heated discussions took place between the two. But these led to nothing. Only one good thing came of them. Some of the Hindu followers of Mirza Sahib left his fold.

By this time Lekh Ram had established a reputation as a fearless, courageous and able speaker. He was, therefore, in great demand. When Mirza Ghulan Ahmed went to Hoshiarpur, Pt. Lekh Ram was sent for. There a very heated discussion took place, which lasted for many hours. This gave Mirza Sahib an opportunity for publishing another book against the Arya Samaj. To this Pt. Lekh Ram wrote a spirited reply. In addition he wrote many short pamphlets exposing the non-Vedic religions and sects.

That Pt. Lekh Ram stood very high in the estimation of the Arya Samajists is proved by many things. It is sufficient to refer to one such testimony. The *Arya Patrika*, an English weekly, wrote at that time, "Pt. Lekh Ram is one of the noblest members of the Lahore Arya Samaj. He has dedicated himself to the work of the Arya Samaj. He is one of the finest scholars of Arabic and Persian. At the last anniversary of the Amritsar Arya Samaj he delivered a very fine lecture. In it he compared all the religions of the world with the Vedic religion. He has established Arya Samajes at many places, and convinced many people of the truth of his religion."

In 1887 Pt. Lekh Ram was appointed editor of the *Arya Gazette*. He continued to edit it for two years, and did his work very ably. The result was that the *Arya Gazette* was read not only by the Arya Samajists but by the public in general as well. This position was very useful to him. Since he had not to go out very often, he had enough spare time to get his books published. He also found time to write several new books.

Then Pt. Lekh Ram undertook one of the biggest tasks of his life. Swami Dayanand had been dead

for more than four years. Still no good biography of him had been brought out up to that time. It is true some lives of his were to be found in the market, but they did not describe the real Swami. All this grieved the Arya Samajists. The Multan Arya Samaj, therefore, passed a resolution that Pt. Lekh Ram should be asked to write a biography of Swamiji. This was accepted by the Provincial Representative Assembly of the Arya Samajes. They asked Pt. Lekh Ram if he would undertake this work. He accepted it without the least hesitation.

Pt. Lekh Ram had to go to many parts of India in order to collect material for the biography. Yet this did not dismay him. He was not a person who loved to stay at home. He always liked to see new persons and new places. For this reason he was called the Arya Musafir or the Arya Traveller.

The Musafir began his work at Lahore. Here he collected as much information as he could. Then he left for Jullundur. He met L. Munshi Ram, afterwards known as Swami Shraddhanand, who gave him much valuable information about Swami Dayanand. This also established a real bond of friendship between the two. At this place he also

delivered a lecture on the Vedas. This was listened to by a very large number of people.

After leaving Jullundur he went to Muttra. There he met some persons who knew both Swami Virjanand and Swami Dayanand intimately. From them he learnt many interesting facts about the lives of both. At the same time, he delivered some lectures there. In some of these he revealed the beauties of the Vedic religion; and in others he exposed the inconsistencies of other religions.

Ajmer was the next place he visited. There he found the Arya Samajists in great distress. They had converted a Mohammadan to the Vedic religion; and this had led to much bitterness between them and the Mohammadans. The Mohammadans had, therefore, started a journal in which the Arya Samajists were bitterly criticised. Not content with this they had also put up other people against them. All these things made the position of the Arya Samajists very difficult.

Naturally the visit of Pt. Lekh Ram was not quite welcome. As soon as he reached there the Arya Samajists appointed four persons to guard him against all kinds of harm. But the Pandit said, "All of you seem to be cowards. You

appear to have no faith in yourselves. I do not want anybody to protect my life. Nothing can do me harm, for God protects us all." He was also warned against receiving any Mohammadan visitors. But he did not heed this warning. On the other hand, he delivered several lectures on Islam, which were not to the taste of the Mohammadans. Before he left, he asked the Arya Samajists to start a paper of their own. They accepted his advice. He contributed several articles to this paper which were afterwards published in book form.

From Ajmer he went to Nasirabad Cantonment. There he again engaged in a discussion with the Mohammadans. But this was stopped by order of the Inspector of Police. It so happened, however, that this gentleman died the very next morning. People thought it was the result of some miracle on the part of the Arya preacher. But he at once told them that he did not believe in miracles and superstitions.

After this he went home on leave. But after a few days he set out on his journey again. Meerut was the next place he visited. He stayed there for some days and collected some facts about the life of Swami Dayanand. Then he visited

Aligarh. But there he fell ill and had to return to the Punjab.

On his way back he stopped at Jullundur and stayed with L. Dev Raj, the founder of a college for girls. He and L. Munshi Ram nursed him with great care. As soon as the fever left him, he thought of returning to his work again. But his friends would not let him do so. He soon received a call from Nakodar, however. It was so urgent that he found it difficult to resist.

At Nakodar there lived a Hindu official in the Revenue department. He had turned Moham-madan only a few days before. He wanted to discuss things with somebody. The people of that place wrote to Pt. Lekh Ram about it. He at once set off, even at the cost of his health.

From there Panditji went to Lahore. After staying at Lahore for a few days he went to Saharanpur. After this he visited Cawnpore and Allahabad. At Allahabad he paid a visit to the Vedic Press founded by Swami Dayanand. He found that things there were not as they should be. Some of the people were doing things which were compromising the position of Swami Dayanand. They were publishing things under his name which were not really his. This upset Pt. Lekh Ram

very much. He reprimanded them for their deceit. He also saw to it that nothing was to be published in future which had not been carefully gone through by a committee of leading and learned Arya Samajists.

After some time he reached Mirzapur. There he came across a member of the Arya Samaj who belonged to a low caste. He was surprised to find that the man had no sacred thread. He asked him why this was. The man replied, "How can I, a low caste Hindu, be invested with the sacred thread? It is only the privilege of high caste Hindus to wear sacred things." But Panditji said to him, "Do not worry. It is your right as much as the right of high caste Hindus, to be invested with the sacred thread. I will, therefore, perform the ceremony myself and invest you with the sacred thread." He kept his word. The ceremony was performed in a few days. All the local Arya Samajists took part in it.

Kashi, Dumroan, Danapur, Bankipur and Patna were the other places he visited. At Bankipur the Secretary of the Arya Samaj received a telegram from Pt. Lekh Ram's people inquiring if the Pandit was alive. A reply was at once sent saying that he was hale and hearty. This was not the



first time that ill-founded rumours had been spread about.

At Bankipur he was advised by a friend not to criticise Islam so much. The friend added, " You might come to grief on account of this." But the Pandit replied, " I do not care for what happens to me. Death is inevitable, therefore I do not bother about it. Nothing will give me greater pleasure than to die for my faith. If this ever happens, my faith will gain by it."

The same friend asked him why he did not translate the *Satyarth Prakash* into Persian. He said that he was already thinking of doing so. But he would take it up after he had written a life of Swami Dayanand. He further added that he wanted to go to Arabia, Persia, Egypt and Turkistan. " Why do you want to do so? " asked the friend. " I want to visit these countries to propagate my faith," said Panditji. " But what will you do," asked the friend, " if the Representative Assembly does not permit you to do so? " " I will go there on my own account," replied the Pandit. " I will be able to live there by practising medicine, of which I know something even now."

It was at this place that he paid a visit to Mr. Khuda Baksh's library. There he came across a

rare edition of the Qoran. He spent several days in the library and took down notes from the books in it. He also paid a visit to a press there which was publishing a paper. In it he came across several reports of discussions which Swami Dayanand had held.

After visiting Calcutta he went to Hardwar. There the Kumbh fair was to be held. He did much to propagate his faith there. Afterwards he went to Lahore and published an account of the fair.

At Lahore he learnt that some Hindus in Hyderabad were going to be converted to Islam. This made him very ill at ease. He therefore left for Hyderabad without the least delay. There he met the persons in question and had several long talks with them. But they said, "We know nothing about these things. You would do better to have a talk with our Maulvis." He then had some discussion with the Maulvis. The result was that the Hindus did not change their faith.

He returned to the Punjab and travelled about from place to place. After a short time he received an invitation from Nahan. A Sanatanist pandit there was creating much trouble for the Arya

Samajists. He went there and delivered forty lectures. After establishing an Arya Samaj he returned home.

After some time Pt. Lekh Ram went to Rajputana. Swami Dayanand had spent some part of his life there and he wanted to know about it. He visited Bundi, Ajmer, Jaipur and other places. At each of these places he delivered lectures. These sometimes brought trouble on his head, but he did not care.

At Ajmer he met Shri Har Bilas Sardar, who said of him, "Excepting Swami Dayanand, I have not come across any other Arya Samajist who is more truthful, more unselfish and more hard-working than Pt. Lekh Ram. His passions are under control, and he never wastes a single minute of his time. He expressed a sense of pain on seeing that some of the Arya Samajists did not act in accordance with their beliefs. He believed that India would never make any progress unless Indians came to have a firm faith in the Vedas. I had been thinking for some time of publishing an edition of the Manu Samriti which should be free from all defects. I talked this thing over with him. He said that he had with him twenty-six different editions of the Manu Samriti. All these,

he said, were rare and he had brought them from Kashmere. On being requested he even translated one chapter of the book into Hindi. He further said that after completing this book he would translate the Ramayana into Hindi. He expressed a desire that the Arya Samajists should bring out a monthly like the *Nineteenth Century and After*. He was very much interested in history and wanted to write a history of ancient India.”

After visiting Rajputana he returned to the Punjab where he stayed for some time. But he again went back to Rajputana to seek out Swami Dayanand's place of birth. He somehow learnt that Swami Dayanand was born in a place in the State of Morvi. He went there and after visiting many places found the exact place of Swamiji's birth.

But he was soon called back to the Punjab, because of the differences amongst the Arya Samajists. Being a man of restless energy he again visited several places in the Punjab. Then he went home on leave. But he did not sit idle. He wrote many articles for the papers. From there he wrote in a letter to a friend, “ It is a pity that the books of the Arya Samaj are not translated

into many languages. It is also a pity that Arya preachers do not know many languages. I really feel sad to think that there are very few preachers of the Arya Samaj who would be ready to sacrifice themselves for their faith. Englishmen give up big posts and become preachers of their faith. But amongst us there are very few well-read and self-sacrificing preachers."

At the age of thirty-five Pt. Lekh Ram married. Even in this he showed the spirit of a reformer, for he omitted many of those ceremonies usually connected with marriage among the Hindus. His wife came of a Brahmin family. She had been brought up in a village and, therefore, did not know the ways of cities. She was very modest and shy. She spoke very little and was of a very gentle disposition. She was devoted to her husband and it gave her the greatest joy to obey his orders. Soon after their marriage Pt. Lekh Ram took her education in hand. She, too, learnt things very quickly.

After his marriage he again resumed his usual activities. He visited a large number of places, where he delivered lectures and held discussions. He also made an attempt to get a monthly published. This, however, could not be done

in his life-time. It was after his death that a paper called the *Arya Musafir* was brought out.

He showed in his articles how it was possible to spread the Vedic religion. He was in favour of widows re-marrying. By this means he hoped to stop the conversion of the Hindus to other religions. He wanted to have a Shuddhi fund for bringing the followers of other religions into the fold of the Arya Samaj. He also thought that a seminary for training preachers was necessary. He insisted on the abolition of early marriage which was ruining the Hindus. It was his desire that the books on the Arya Samaj should be published in every language. He felt that there were too many *sadhus* in India. Their number should either be reduced or they should become missionaries of the Arya Samaj. It was his belief that charity should be directed along the right lines. These things constitute the contribution of Pt. Lekh Ram to the Arya Samaj.

Pt. Lekh Ram had, up to this time, neglected the writing of the biography of Swami Dayanand. He was now pressed by his friends to complete the work. But it was not possible for him to sit down to it for long. He would one day take up

the work in earnest, but the very next day he would be called away from it by something else.

He never found it possible to resist the temptation of going out. No sooner did he hear of some Sanatanist pandit creating trouble at some place than he went there. If ever he was told that a Hindu was going to be converted to some other religion, he felt it his duty to save him. Furthermore, he was a very fine speaker. The Arya Samajes, therefore, always wanted to hear him. Thus he would visit more places in one month than others would do in a year.

One day he received a letter telling of his younger brother's death. Naturally, he wanted to go home. But immediately afterwards he received a message from an Arya Samaj saying that a Hindu was going to abjure his religion. Even under the shadow of his brother's death he chose to save the Hindu. Such was his zeal for the Arya Samaj.

In such circumstances the writing of Swami Dayanand's biography could not be done with as much speed as he desired. He also found some difficulty in piecing together the notes. He felt that he needed a little more information on the subject. He therefore had to go to Ajmer again for this purpose. There again the usual thing

happened. The Ajmer Arya Samaj was holding its anniversary at that time and Pt. Lekh Ram was asked to take part in it. On the very first day the Arya Samajists passed in procession through the streets of the city, singing hymns. He also went *with them*. But instead of singing hymns he delivered short addresses.

After a while the procession came near the tomb of a Mohammadan saint. The Arya Samajists told the Pandit not to make a speech there. But he would not listen to them. He stood a short distance from the tomb and began to make a speech. The Arya Samajists got nervous and left him. After some time they discovered that he was talking to a large group of Mohammadans. They were all pleased with him, because he was speaking to them about the one, true God.

At last Pt. Lekh Ram settled down at Jullundur with his wife and his only son. There were two reasons for doing so. In the first place, his wife felt quite at home amongst the people of this place. He also wanted to be near Mahatma Munshi Ram in order to complete the biography of Swami Dayanand.

The people who saw Panditji at Jullundur felt what a good husband and a good father he was.



They also realised his unselfishness. For a long time Panditji had been getting only twenty-five rupees a month. When he was married, his pay was raised to thirty rupees. When a son was born to him he got himself insured for two thousand rupees. He then began to draw thirty-five rupees a month. But he never applied for any increase in his pay. He was always content with what he got.

He could have made a lot of money from his books, but he never did so. Whatever money he got from them he gave away to the Arya Samaj. His wife also proved to be his best helper in this matter. She never cared for ornaments, nor did she worry about fine clothes. She always remained devoted to the cause that her husband loved. After her husband's death she gave all the money she got from insurance for the purpose of founding a scholarship in the Gurukula at Hardwar.

Pt. Lekh Ram's life was very regular at Julundur. He got up at about 4 o'clock in the morning. After a bath he performed the Havan and said his prayers. Then he studied the Vedas for about an hour. After this he read books about other religions. Then he continued to write the

biography till eleven o'clock. From eleven to two he took his meals, rested for a while and devoted himself to his household work. From two to five he read books or wrote articles. He was very fond of exercise and never missed it. In the evening he generally took a long walk. He followed this routine not only at Jullundur, but also at other places.

It was his great desire that his wife should help him to spread the message of the Arya Samaj amongst the women of India. He paid much attention, therefore, to her education. He also took her with him when he went to attend the anniversary of an Arya Samaj. One of the many places they visited together in this manner was Muttra. But there his only son fell ill. They therefore returned to Jullundur with all speed. At Jullundur the boy passed away, but Panditji bore his grief manfully.

Immediately after this he went to attend the anniversary of the Pasrur Arya Samaj. There he was sent for by the man in charge of the Police station. He said to him, "If any trouble occurs here, you will be held responsible." The Pandit replied, "I have not come here to fight but to deliver the message of the Vedas. I am not

concerned with what happens. I will do my duty at all costs."

It has already been said that the Mohammadans were very hostile to Pt. Lekh Ram. They often tried to harm him. First of all, they tried to file a suit against him at Amritsar because he had written a book against them. But they did not succeed. Then cases were started against him at Mirzapur, Allahabad, Lahore, Delhi and Bombay. But they were all dismissed. Similar attempts were made at Peshawar and Meerut. But none of these succeeded. At Delhi the magistrate, Captain Davis, wrote in his judgment that the books written by Pt. Lekh Ram were not in any way objectionable.

On account of these things the Arya Samajists frequently warned Pt. Lekh Ram. They told him that his life was in danger. But he did not care about his life. In February, 1887, a well-built young Mohammadan went to Panditji's house and said, "I was converted to Islam two years ago. But I want to become a Hindu again. Will you please help me." Panditji said that he would do so as soon as possible. From that day the young man followed Panditji like his shadow. Many Arya Samajists told Panditji that the young man

was not to be trusted, but he said, "I do not care. I must do my duty."

After a few days Pt. Lekh Ram went to Multan. When he came back he found the young man waiting for him in the office of the Arya Pritinidhi Sabha. The youth was wearing a blanket and he spoke in a very low and feeble voice. Panditji asked him if he was suffering from fever. He replied that he was not feeling well. So they went to a doctor. The doctor said that he had no fever, but seemed to be suffering from some disorder of the blood. He thought of applying some sort of plaster. But the young man said that he would prefer to have some medicine to drink. Pt. Lekh Ram asked the doctor to do this. The doctor then gave him some medicine to drink.

Then Pt. Lekh Ram went home accompanied by this young man. When they got there he sat on a cot on the verandah and began to write an account of the death of Swami Dayanand. After some time his mother said, "I have not yet got any oil from the bazaar." Panditji then got down from the cot and stretched his limbs. He was probably thinking of going to the bazaar himself to fetch the oil. The young man was, at that moment, standing close by him. But Panditji

never suspected him of evil intentions. It certainly did not occur to him that he was near his death.

Soon the young man saw his chance. He immediately thrust a dagger into Panditji's intestines. Then the blood began to flow and Panditji fell down. For a time he was able to hold on to the murderer without uttering any cry of pain. But he lost so much blood in a short time that he became weak and had to loosen his hold on the culprit. The murderer at once tried to escape. He had not gone very far, however, when he was caught by Panditji's wife. He struck her with a strong piece of wood and she fell down senseless. But just then Panditji's mother discovered the crime and cried for help.

Other people arrived on the scene. They took Panditji to the hospital where his condition went from bad to worse. But even to the last he did not lose his senses. Indeed, he continued to talk to some of his friends. He also repeated some hymns from the Vedas. At 2 o'clock in the morning he passed away. His last words were, "Do not let the Arya Samaj stop publishing books which explain its mission."

The next day the dead body was taken to the cremation grounds. The funeral procession was

attended by a large number of persons. So tragic was the death that all felt it keenly. When the body was placed on the funeral pyre there was hardly an eye that was dry. The hearts of the Arya Samajists were touched most of all. While they were standing round the funeral pyre the Arya Samajist said, "Let us now sink all our differences. Let us make peace." A peace was made between the two sections of the Arya Samaj, but it did not last long.

Thus Pt. Lekh Ram died manfully for his faith, and in so doing died the death of a martyr.